

IOWA OUTDOORS

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

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STRESS FROM SPRING SPAWN IS CAUSING SOME FISH TO DIE

DES MOINES – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is fielding calls from concerned anglers about seeing dead fish in their favorite fishing hole. A recent report of dead crappie and bluegill at Badger Creek had one angler questioning if the fish she caught was safe to eat.

“We see this natural die off each year in different lakes and ponds affecting mainly crappie and bluegill, but there are some bass and other species afflicted as well,” said Marion Conover, chief of the DNR’s fisheries bureau. “The fish kill reported at Badger Creek is caused by stress from spawning. Most of the fish were crappies, but there were some bluegills as well.”

Conover said fish caught from Badger Creek and other lakes experiencing similar natural mortality are safe to eat.

“As with fish caught from any lake or stream, we recommend that people properly care for the fish once it’s caught and cook it thoroughly,” he said. “Fish are part of a healthy diet and excellent table fare.”

Anglers should not associate every fish kill this time of year to natural mortality and should call their local conservation officer or DNR office if they notice dead fish.

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WILDLIFE BABIES BELONG IN THE WILD

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

DES MOINES--It's as predictable as April showers and May flowers. The wildlife baby season has officially begun in Iowa.

From now until at least mid-June, Iowa Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) offices across the state will be inundated with hundreds of phone calls and scores of deliveries regarding "orphaned wildlife". It will be nothing out of the ordinary for biologists to discover that complete litters of baby raccoons, foxes, or even skunks have mysteriously appeared on their doorsteps.

From fuzzy yellow ducklings to tiny baby bunnies, nothing appears more cute and cuddly than a wildlife baby. It's really no mystery why humans feel compelled to come to the rescue. But in reality, most of the wildlife babies reported to DNR field offices are not really orphaned at all. And while the people who attempt to "save" these babies may have the very best of intentions, they are in fact dooming the very creatures they intend to help.

Regardless of whether they are birds or mammals, the young of most wildlife species leave their nests or dens well in advance of being able to care for itself. Although broods or litters may become widely scattered during this fledgling period, they still remain under the direct care and feeding of their parents. Unfortunately, this care is often short-circuited by human intervention.

When a newborn fawn, nest full of baby cottontails, or brood of mallard ducks is discovered by humans, it is frequently assumed that the animals are orphaned. The fate of these youngsters becomes sealed as the hapless creatures are promptly "rescued from the wild".

Most wildlife babies, at least the fortunate ones, will perish soon after capture -- usually due to the stress of being handled by humans or placed into the terrifying environment of a slick sided cardboard box. Should an animal survive this trauma, it often succumbs more slowly to pneumonia, a host of other diseases, or undernourishment.

Whether they are adults or young, all species of wildlife have highly specific needs for survival. "Rescuing a baby from its mother" not only shows bad judgment -- it is also illegal.

Observing wildlife in its natural habitat is always a unique privilege. Taking a good photo or two provides an even more lasting memory. But once you've done that, let well enough alone.

Leave wildlife babies where they belong -- in the wild.

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IOWA FISHING REPORT

For the week of May 28, 2003

www.iowadnr.com

For current information on fishing conditions for your lake or area, contact the office in that district. Phone numbers are listed with each district report.

Southwest

Green Valley (Union): Anglers are catching big crappies in the rocks and in 5 to 8-feet of water. Bluegills are being caught on the spawning beds.

Fogle Lake (Ringgold): Bluegills are being caught on the spawning beds near the back of the bay area, on the west side of the lake. Crappies are being caught along the dam.

Binder Lake (Adams): Anglers are catching 8 to 11-inch crappies and yellow bass along the dam.

Loch Ayr (Ringgold): Anglers are catching 7 to 11-inch crappies along the dam.

Three Mile (Union): Anglers are catching walleyes on the points in 5 to 8 feet of water and over the fish mounds. Channel catfish are being caught at north end and in shallow bays on night crawlers and under or near the fish cleaning station. Fishing is good for crappies in 6 to 10 feet of water over rock areas. Largemouth bass fishing is good. Bluegills are being caught on the spawning beds at north end of lake.

Twelve Mile (Union): Channel catfish fishing is good at north end. Walleye fishing is good on the points. Crappies are moving into rocks and trees in deep shoreline areas on the west side of the lake. Anglers are catching lots of yellow bass. Largemouth bass fishing is good.

Wilson Lake (Taylor): Anglers are catching 10 to 12-inch crappies off the dam using black, slow moving jigs.

Little River (Decatur): Crappies, 7 to 10 inches, are being caught in the rocks with bigger ones in the mouths of timbered bays. Walleye fishing is good. Bluegills are on spawning beds.

Slip Bluff (Decatur): Bluegill can be caught on spawning beds at the east corner of the dam.

West Lake Osceola (Clarke): Bluegill and crappie fishing is good near the shoreline. Largemouth bass fishing is good.

Viking (Montgomery): Crappie fishing is fair using tube jigs around structure. Bluegills are being caught along shore with small jigs and night crawlers. Catfish fishing has been good on liver.

Cold Springs (Cass): Catfish are being caught on liver and prepared baits. Bluegill fishing is fair using small jigs or night crawlers near shore.

DeSoto Bend (Harrison): Crappie fishing is good along shore and rock riprap.

Manawa (Pottawattamie): Bluegill fishing is good along shallows and lagoons on jigs and night crawlers. Anglers are picking up a few bullheads and channel catfish.

Greenfield (Adair): Fishing is good for 8-inch bluegills using jigs and/or night crawlers along shoreline.

Orient (Adair): Fishing is good for crappies using jigs and/or night crawlers along the shoreline.

Nodaway (Adair): Bluegills are biting on jigs/crawlers along the shore and around structure.

Prairie Rose (Shelby): Fishing is good for 7-inch crappies on jigs/minnows around rocks and woody structure. Channel catfish are being caught on liver. Bluegills are being caught along shore.

Willow (Harrison): Largemouth bass fishing is good using a variety of baits.

Big Creek Lake (Polk): Crappie fishing has been excellent using jigs and/or jig/minnows combinations. Walleye fishing has been good using lead-headed jigs and minnows, although most walleye caught are below the 15-inch legal size limit. Bluegill fishing is also good, with the best areas around rocky areas and near woody structure. Channel catfish fishing has been good, with 2 to 3-pound fish taken.

Beaver Lake (Dallas): Crappie fishing is good with the best areas around the woody structure along the shorelines. Largemouth bass fishing has also improved with the warmer weather using top-water lures.

Don Williams (Boone): Crappie fishing is excellent with the best fishing around woody structure in fairly shallow water in the mornings and evenings. Most anglers are using white twister tails and some minnows. Largemouth bass fishing has been good using top-water lures around shoreline structure. Channel catfish fishing is good using night crawlers in the north end of the lake.

Lake Ahquabi (Warren): Bluegill and redear fishing has been fair using night crawlers or wax worms. Crappies are being caught using crappie jigs and/or wax worms or worms. Largemouth bass, primarily sub-legal sized fish, are being caught on crankbaits. A few channel catfish have been reported caught.

Hooper Lake (Warren): Bluegill and redear have been caught using traditional baits and lures. Some largemouth bass are being caught on crankbaits, although as in Lake Ahquabi, most fish are sub-legal.

Rock Creek (Jasper): Crappie fishing has been good from shore and boat using jigs and minnows. Most fish are in the 9 to 10-inch size. Largemouth bass fishing has been fair to good using top-water lures.

Easter Lake (Polk): Crappie fishing has been fair with anglers using wax worms. Largemouth bass have been taken along the face of the dam. Walleye have been caught off the dam and around the island. Some channel catfish are being taken in the shallower areas.

Hickory Grove Lake (Story): Crappie fishing is fair using jigs/minnows. Largemouth bass fishing has been good using top-water lures along the shoreline. Bluegill fishing has picked up using traditional small hooks tipped with worms.

Saylorville Lake (Polk): Crappie fishing has been good using micro-jigs and wax worms, or bobbers and minnows. Bluegill fishing is good using worms. White bass fishing has been good using jigs near the outlet to Big Creek. Tailwater: White bass fishing has been excellent below Saylorville using lead heads and twister tails. A few flathead catfish have been reported caught.

Lake Red Rock (Marion): Crappie fishing has improved with the best areas in the Whitebreast and Roberts Creek areas of the lake. Tailwater: Crappie and white bass/wiper fishing has been good in the tailwater from Lake Red Rock using jigs and/or minnows. A few larger walleye have also been caught.

Farm Ponds: Bluegill fishing is good near shore on small jigs and night crawlers. Bass fishing is good using rubber worms and surface lures.

For more information on fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.

Southeast

Mississippi River: River levels are falling quickly in pools 16 – 19. Water levels in pools 16 and 17 are below flood stage and falling. Pools 18 and 19 are near or at flood stage but falling. Fishing is slow on pools 16, 17 and the upper stretch of 18 for crappie, bluegill and catfish. Catfishing is good in flooded timber areas on shad and cut bait. Bluegill and crappie are scattered but biting well.

Lake Darling (Washington): The bigger crappies are starting to move in. Late afternoon on a sunny day seems to be the best time to catch them although the action has been spotty. Plenty of fish available in the 9 to 10-inch range. Use yellow twister tails worked slowly or minnows and bobber along the rocky shorelines for the best results.

Lake Geode (Henry): Crappies are finishing their spawn. Bluegills and redear sunfish are moving into the shallow water. A small (1/64-ounce) jig tipped with worms worked slowly is catching fish. Try a fly rod and popper for some top water action.

Lake Odessa (Louisa): The lake remains high and muddy. The Toolesboro road is still closed and will be for a while. The Sand Run boat ramp is under water. The Schafer ramp is still usable.

Lake Rathbun (Appanoose): Crappies have been biting on small jigs and minnows. Walleyes have been biting on jigs. Channel catfish have been biting on night crawlers.

Lake Miami (Monroe): Bluegills and crappies have been hitting on small jigs. The flooded timber areas of the lake have been the most productive. Largemouth bass have been hitting on a variety of artificial lures.

Lake Sugema (Van Buren): Bluegills and crappies have been hitting on small jigs and minnows. The evening hours have been the most productive times. Largemouth bass have been hitting on a variety of artificial lures. Walleyes have been hitting crankbaits and minnows.

Lake Keomah (Mahaska): Bluegills have been hitting on small jigs. Crappies have been hitting on minnows. Largemouth bass have been hitting on crankbaits and spinner baits.

Coralville Reservoir (Johnson): Crappie fishing has been slow. Channel catfishing has been good to fair throughout the reservoir on dead shad and paste baits.

Lake Macbride (Johnson): Crappie fishing has been fair throughout the lake on jigs and minnows.

Diamond Lake (Poweshiek): Crappie and bluegill fishing has been fair near the shore. An occasional largemouth bass is being caught using artificial baits. Anglers are reminded that minnow use is prohibited.

Lake Iowa (Iowa): Bluegill fishing has been fair throughout the lake in the evening fishing from shore or a boat.

Pleasant Creek (Linn): Crappie and bluegill are being caught near the shoreline on jigs and minnows.

Wapsipinicon and Cedar rivers: Water conditions are high and muddy making fishing difficult.

Iowa River (Louisa): The river is finally coming down. Catfish are biting on minnows and shad guts.

Skunk River (Washington and Henry): Water levels are back to normal. Catfishing is fair on night crawlers and minnows. Carp are biting on dough balls and night crawlers below the Oakland Mills Dam. They are also still catching some white bass below the dam; twister tails tipped with minnows have always been my favorite for these guys.

Farm Ponds: Bluegill and bass fishing has been good.

For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.

Northeast

Mississippi River: Water levels are receding on the Mississippi River. Pool 10 was at 612.4 feet as of Tuesday morning and the temperature was 66 degrees. **Pools 9-11:** Bluegills are moving into the shallows for spawning season and fishing is excellent. Big bluegills are being caught on a piece of night crawler fished under a bobber and by surface poppers used in shallow, rocky bays and around submersed trees. Bluegill hotspots include DeSoto Bay in Pool 9, Harpers Slough and Bussey Lake in Pool 10. Largemouth bass fishing is good on artificial lures in backwater areas. Freshwater drum fishing is good on crankbaits fished in the side channels. Water levels in **Pools 12-15** are falling about a half of a foot a day and fishing success varies. **Pools 12-15:** Freshwater drum are being taken on night crawlers fished in the tailwaters, side channels and main channel borders. Channel catfish are hitting night crawlers and prepared baits in the side channels and areas of current in the backwaters. A few crappies are being caught on jigs or on minnows under a bobber. **Pool 13:** Middle Sabula Lake is active with bluegill, channel catfish and freshwater drum being caught. A few walleye are being caught off the rocks in areas of current using crankbaits and plastics.

Cedar River (Floyd and Mitchell): Channel catfish and bluegill are biting on worms. Walleye fishing is good and a few northern pike are also being taken.

Yellow River (Allamakee): Smallmouth bass fishing is good on crankbaits.

Wapsipinicon River (Buchanan): Crappie fishing is good in the backwater areas using jigs or minnows under a bobber.

Maquoketa River (Delaware): Channel catfish are good on night crawlers, stink baits and large minnows. White bass (stripers) are good on jigs and twister tails below the Delhi dam. Smallmouth bass fishing is good on spinner baits in the catch-and-release area below the Delhi dam. An occasional walleye has been reported.

Lake Delhi (Delaware): Crappies are hitting jigs fished under a bobber in the quiet bays and coves. Bluegill fishing is good on worms.

South Prairie Lake and East Lake (Black Hawk): Crappie fishing is good using wax worm or minnows fished under a slip bobber around brush piles.

George Wyth Lake (Black Hawk): Largemouth bass can be found hanging tight to the woody structure.

Casey Lake (Tama): This lake is good for bluegill and crappie using jigs tipped with wax worms fished near woody structure.

Lake Meyer (Winneshiek): Good to excellent fishing for bluegill, crappies and largemouth bass. Bluegill fishing is best using a piece of night crawler on a small hook suspended under a bobber. Crappies and bass are hitting minnows.

Lake Hendricks (Howard): Crappie fishing is good on jigs tipped with a minnow or small jigs. Bluegill fishing is good on a piece of worm suspended below the bobber along the rocky shorelines or weed lines. A few largemouth bass are biting small lures fished slowly in the shallows.

Black Hawk and Buchanan County lakes: Crappie fishing is excellent on minnows and jigs around rocky shorelines and brush piles. Bluegill fishing is excellent using wax worms and red worms fished along the shoreline.

Trout fishing and stream conditions are excellent. For current trout stocking information, contact the Big Spring Hatchery at 563-245-1699, Decorah Hatchery at 563-382-3315 or Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-5736. You can also view the trout stocking calendar on-line by going to www.iowadnr.com, clicking on **Fish and Fishing** and then choosing **Favorite Pages**.

For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-927-3276.

Northwest

Spirit Lake (Dickinson): Crappies are biting in Anglers Bay. Bullheads are being caught at the North Grade on night crawlers, but fishing has slowed. Smallmouth bass are being caught on the rock piles. Anglers are catching walleyes all over the lake. Bigger fish are being caught in shallow water. Some good sized yellow perch are being caught.

West Okoboji (Dickinson): Anglers are catching bluegills around boat docks on the main lake, and crappies and bluegills in the canals. The best baits are a slip bobber and small crappie jig tipped with wigglers. Some largemouth bass are being caught in the canals.

East Okoboji (Dickinson): Bullheads are biting at the north end. Some walleyes are being caught at the Hwy. 9 Bridge. Use minnows or light twister tails. Anglers are catching some bluegills and crappies at the footbridge.

Minnewashta (Dickinson): Crappies are moving in to spawn so the bite is on. Anglers are catching a few bluegills. Largemouth bass are starting to spawn and anglers are catching a few fish.

Center Lake (Dickinson): Anglers are catching some nice crappies. The walleye bite is sporadic. Drift fishing with live bait, pulling crankbaits or fishing leeches under lighted bobbers are all good choices.

Silver Lake (Dickinson): The walleye bite has been hit or miss, but night fishing seems to produce more fish. There are good numbers of keeper sized fish available for harvest.

Lost Island Lake (Clay and Palo Alto): Anglers are still catching walleyes, but now have to work for them. Nice fish are available for persistent anglers. The crappie bite it on.

Silver Lake (Palo Alto): Anglers are catching perch, crappies and good numbers of bullheads.

Lake Pahoja (Lyon): Anglers are catching decent sized channel catfish.

Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo): Walleye fishing is good. Walleye anglers drifting or trolling live bait rigs are catching a few fish. Trolling crankbaits in 6 to 12-feet of water is providing some walleye action. Remember the 14-inch minimum length limit on walleye. Yellow bass have been spawning over the past week and fishing has slowed. Small jigs and pieces of night crawler have been working best. Bullhead fishing is good. Use night crawlers on the windy shorelines.

Briggs Woods (Hamilton): Largemouth bass are hitting on spinner baits and jigs fished along the edge of vegetation. Bluegills are biting on small pieces of night crawler and small jigs.

Little Wall Lake (Hamilton): Crappie fishing is fair. Use small jigs and minnows for best results.

Eldred Sherwood (Hancock): Bluegills are hitting small pieces of night crawler and small jigs. Largemouth bass fishing is fair. Spinner baits and crankbaits are both catching bass.

Beeds Lake (Franklin): Crappie fishing is good. Use small tube jigs and minnows around jetties and brush piles for best results. Bluegills are hitting small pieces of night crawler around the shoreline.

Black Hawk Lake (Sac): The bite is red hot for 8 to 9-inch bullheads all over the lake. Walleye fishing is good, but has slowed a little. Try trolling crankbaits or using leeches under a bobber.

Storm Lake (Buena Vista): Walleye fishing is fair to good using crankbaits. Anglers are catching some white bass.

Brushy Creek (Webster): Crappies have moved to shallow water. Most are found in the bays using minnows or small jigs. Anglers are catching bass in the shallows around structure using spinner baits, plastic worms or other bass plugs. Walleye fishing is better on overcast days or during the evening using night crawlers or leeches. Fishing is excellent for smaller bluegills.

For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.

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